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SCIENCE OF ART IN PRISON

Abstract

Penitentiary isolation is associated with deprivation of prisoners needs as well as threat and conflict situations. Significantly reduced relationships with the social environment is accompanied by the inevitability to adapt to the realities of a total institution. Prisoners are also influenced by stigmatization, standardization, depersonalization and degradation. Significant components of their psychological situation is violence, boredom and loneliness. The aim of the presentation is to characterize the main determinants of somatic and mental health of prisoners and describe selected prevention programs, which can raise their level of psychological resistance. Selected results of the author's research on using art in the process of penitentiary correction will also be presented. The research was carried out within the project "Labyrinth of Freedom" (in the Nowy Wisnicz prison) and the "Horizon of Freedom" (in the Detention Center in Radom).

Key words: prison, art, correction, science

Nauka wobec wykorzystania sztuki w więzieniu Streszczenie

Izolacja penitencjarna wiąże się z doświadczaniem przez więźniów deprywacji potrzeb, sytuacji zagrożenia oraz różnego rodzaju konfliktów. Znacznemu ograniczeniu relacji z otoczeniem społecznym towarzyszy konieczność dostosowania się do realiów instytucji totalnej. Więźniowie podlegają działaniu procesów stygmatyzacji, standaryzacji, depersonalizacji oraz degradacji. Istotnymi składowymi ich sytuacji psychologicznej są przemoc, nuda i poczucie osamotnienia. Celem artykułu jest dokonanie charakterystyki głównych uwarunkowań zdrowia somatycznego i psychicznego osadzonych w zakładach karnych oraz omówienie wybranych programów oddziaływań profilaktycznych, które mogą podnosić poziom odporności psychicznej. Autorzy przedstawiają także wybrane wyniki swoich badań na temat możliwości wykorzystania sztuki w procesie resocjalizacji penitencjarnej. Badania były prowadzone w ramach projektów „Labirynt wolności” (w Zakładzie Karnym w Nowym Wiśniczu) oraz „Horyzont wolności” (w Areszcie Śledczym w Radomiu).

Słowa kluczowe: więzienie, sztuka, resocjalizacja, nauka

Introduction. Prison as a Life Environment

A prisoner serves his sentence in a monotone, routinized environment. Prisons around the world share a similar architecture (Christianson, 2004). The priorities are, obviously, isolating prisoners from the rest of society and ensuring security within the facility. Permanent fixtures found in the architecture of penitentiary facilities are high walls, barred windows and barbed wire.

The essence of a custodial sentence is the subjection of a criminal to enforced isolation. The psychological aspects of prison isolation are the most detrimental to inmates. The circumstances surrounding penitentiary isolation can be described in terms of the stress and challenging situations with which the prisoner is confronted. Situations involving the deprivation of needs, threats and various types of conflicts take on unique dimensions within prison walls. The requirement to adapt to the realities of a total institution is accompanied by extensive restrictions in relations with the social environment. Inmates are subjected to the workings of the phenomenon of prizonization. This term is used to characterize the process and the effects of prisoners adapting to the conditions of a penal facility. According to Haney (2002, pp. 79–84), prizonization includes the following symptoms: dependence on institutional structure and contingencies, hypervigilance, interpersonal distrust and suspicion, emotional over-control, alienation and psychological distancing, social withdrawal and isolation, incorporation of exploitative norms of prison culture, diminished sense of self-worth and personal value. It may also cause post-traumatic stress reactions.

Even the most well-organized penitentiary institution is not capable of filling the entirety of an inmate's free time with productive activities. This is compounded by the reluctant attitude of many inmates to rehabilitation offerings, often rendering such efforts fruitless. Some prisoners face a long sentence in a penitentiary facility, which equates to a massively excessive amount of tedious free time. The conditions of life in a penitentiary institution amount to a situation of continual burdens and deficiencies. Such circumstances as overcrowding and the necessity of being permanently placed in a group of randomly-selected people provide an excess of stimuli. At the same time, there are deficiencies resulting from the monotony and repetitiveness of everyday activities, along with the isolation from friends, family and events "on the outside." The experience of serving a custodial sentence is associated with the deprivation of many needs (including those for sex, security and self-expression), as well as with the experience of tension and fear. It additionally involves the effort connected to adaptation to the prison environment and the conditions of serving one's sentence (Crewe, 2007; Picken, 2012).

The specific architecture and colour scheme of penitentiary facilities results from the lack of attention to this aspect of the prison environment; at the same time the impoverished environment causes an aesthetic deprivation in prisoners because, to various degrees, they had become accustomed to much richer stimulation outside of prison. It could thus be said that they experience "aesthetic deprivation," which in addition consists in their incapacity to engage in a fully autonomous

realisation of their aesthetic preferences. Moss and O'Neill (2014) draw attention to the negative impact of this type of deprivation in hospital conditions.

We are of the view that conditions in penitentiary facilities constitute an analogical situation. In the case of some prisons, it would even seem appropriate to speak of sensory deprivation. This is a state of things in need of change, considering the fact that perpetrators of particularly serious crimes often suffer from dissocial personality disorder (Kiehl, 2009) associated *inter alia* with low tolerance to deprivation and high susceptibility to frustration which, accumulating during years of isolation in prison, can transform into aggression either during the prisoner's stay in the penal institution or after release from it.

Walker et al., the authors of the article describing results of meta-analysis of 15 longitudinal studies on the effects of environmental factors on the mental state of prisoners stress, say that: "There is certainly a need for more primary studies on the effects of specific aspects of physical prison environment on mental health, such as the architecture of the building, size of cells, number of inmates per cell or communal space and light" (2014, p. 434). Even in studies on resilience in prisoners, conducted *around the world* in the past decade (see: Mendes, 2011; Albukurdi et al., 2012; Connelly, Feldman, 2014), the role of physical environment of the penitentiary institution is generally omitted. But – as we will try to point out – there are many reasons suggesting that aesthetic aspect of prison environment plays an important role in facilitating inmates' resilience.

The poor aesthetic state of penitentiary facilities results doubtlessly from a large number of factors, difficult to diagnose, but which likely include the following: (1) absence of attention to the issue by those engaged in designing and administering the facilities, (2) financial problems, (3) a more or less conscious conviction that the imprisonment of convicts as a punishment should also be unpleasant in respect of the aesthetics of the place where they are kept, (4) a punitive social attitude which is also expressed in the absence of a desire to improve the conditions in which sentences are served, particularly if it concerns meeting needs of inmates that are not considered of a primary nature.

We feel that the aforementioned rationales should be assessed as insufficient from the perspective of a goal of custodial sentence, assuming that its most important objective is the social benefit, whose attainment is more likely by rehabilitation of inmates than revenge for the crimes they have perpetrated.

Indeed, there is empirical evidence in support of the notion that the aesthetics of a penitentiary facility can exert a positive influence on inmates.

It may also be considered that an appropriate selection of stimuli can activate the regions of the brain responsible for cognition and for moral decisions. In their well-known missive paper "The Science of Art," Ramachandran and Hirstein (1999) propose a theory of art based on neurobiological and psycho-evolutionary foundations. Developing this kind of scientific investigation may, in our opinion, facilitate the construction of aesthetic stimuli which can be used as a planned element in the rehabilitation of prisoners.

“The Labyrinth of Freedom” and “The Horizon of Freedom”¹

According to Ellen Dissanayake, an anthropologist from the University of Washington, the term *artification* means to “make ordinary reality extraordinary” (1992, p. 49). The aforementioned sentence is a good description of the essence of the projects “The Labyrinth of Freedom” and “The Horizon of Freedom,” both carried out in Polish prisons. In both cases the projects were inspired by Professor Zbigniew Bajek, director of Interdisciplinary Studio One in the Faculty of Painting in the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow.

“The Labyrinth of Freedom” is a project of artistic activities carried out in 2012 at the prison in Nowy Wisnicz. During the course of the artistic activities attempts were made to engage in dialogue with inmates, as well as to improve their quality of life in the prison. Project participants were both artists and prisoners. The first group was composed of 28 people – lecturers, doctoral candidates and students. Apart from the authors of this paper, themselves psychologists from the Jagellonian University, all of them represent the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow. The second group of participants in the artistic endeavours was made up of inmates serving sentences in the Nowy Wisnicz prison.

From April to June 2012, inmates from the prison in Nowy Wisnicz were given the opportunity to speak out on the subject of freedom. Each of the over 400 prisoners received a white piece of paper measuring 20 x 20 cm and containing the word “Freedom.” They were all asked to provide a statement on the subject of freedom, in a form of their choosing. By mid-June, a range of types of statements – paintings, collages, sketches – had been received from 85 prisoners, and by the end of 2012 the number of prisoners who had made statements concerning freedom amounted to 110 people (roughly 25% of inmates). The location where “The Labyrinth of Freedom” project was concluded was the castle in Nowy Wisnicz. On 16th June 2012, an exhibit was inaugurated in which works by participants were placed on display, by employees and students of the Academy of Fine Arts as well as by the inmates.

“The Horizon of Freedom” was carried out in the detention facility in Radom. This project – similarly to that described in “The Labyrinth of Freedom” – was not associated directly with rehabilitation aims. It involved engagement in artistic activity, intended to improve the lives of inmates. In 2014, the detention centre in Radom held over 1000 inmates and other men placed in temporary custody.² In accordance with Polish law, they are to be provided with a one-hour walk each day. The Radom detention facility features a unique solution for the placement of exercise yards, as inmates travel underground from their residential quarters to the yards. The exercise yards themselves are a group of over 20 concrete “cages” with a bench in the middle, secured overhead by a metallic net. Artists from the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow

¹ The projects were also described in our other publications.

² On 7th April 2014, when the authors conducted the study, the detention facility in Radom held a total of 1025 inmates, including 870 with sentences and 155 under temporary arrest.

as well as invited artists from the Czech city of Ostrava fashioned an enclave of colours and artistic imaginations of freedom within this massive complex of oppressive prison buildings, done by painting the walls of 19 exercise yards.

Art in Prison through the Eyes of Inmates

When one takes into account the nature of prison isolation, it comes as no surprise that all of the inmates who the authors spoke with at the detention facility in Radom (103 men in total) expressed positive opinions about the change – the appearance of “new,” painted exercise yards. Yet we were interested in something more – we wanted to determine what the preferences were of the inmates regarding the images that appeared on the walls of the exercise yards, and whether these preferences were aligned with the choices of representatives from a so-called normal population. To do this, we showed pictures of the 19 exercise yards to prisoners (N = 103) as well as students of psychology and rehabilitation (N = 67, including 58 females and 9 males). Representatives of both groups were asked to indicate three pictures presenting the painted exercised yards they felt most favourably towards and three which they felt the least favourably towards. In analysing their choices, we counted the total number of positive and negative selections for each separate image, and then expressed them in numbers (for example, if there were 10 positive and 2 negative ratings, the indicator for a given image was +8).

In respect of positive selections, representatives of both groups were surprisingly consistent. Both inmates and students preferred the images labelled as no. 1 (a mountain landscape – inmates: +31; students: +36) and no. 2 (colourful clouds – inmates: +23; students: +48).

Photo 1. Mountain landscape³



Photo 2. Colourful clouds



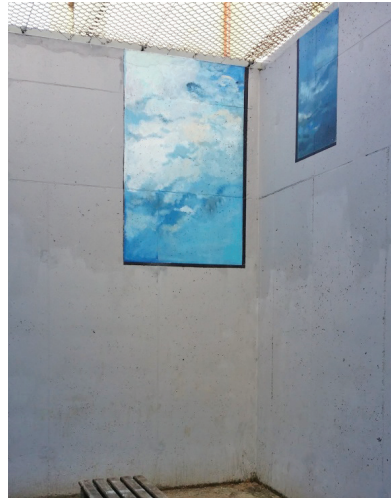
³ The color photographs were taken by Przemysław Piotrowski; the names of the projects were given by the authors of this chapter.

The third most popular photograph among inmates was that of project no. 3 (a colourful composition; +16).

Photo 3. Colourful composition



Photo 4. Fragment of sky



As for students, their third preference was photograph no. 4 (a fragment of sky; +22).

As can be seen, representatives of both groups prefer spatial images which create the illusion that the viewer is not held in by the walls of the exercise yard. In three cases these are landscapes (mountains, clouds: Photo 1, 2, 4). Photograph no. 3 contains highly-contrasting colours.

Interestingly, the results discussed above are consistent with those noted by a pair of Russian émigré artists, Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid. They established a surprising similarity in aesthetic preferences among residents of Europe, Africa, Asia and both Americas. Participants from various countries uniformly preferred the colours blue and green. The most popular images were those presenting realistic scenes, especially ones containing such elements as water, open space, trees and other plant life (see: Wypijewski, 1997; Dutton, 2003). In 1992, a similar study was conducted by Orians and Heerwagen. Children shown photographs presenting various landscapes expressed a strong preference for those depicting a typical savannah (Orians, Heerwagen, 1992).

These results may be interpreted by referring to evolutionary psychology. Evolutionary psychology concerns itself with the human mind; in order to understand the manner in which it functions, this branch of science looks to the past – to the history of our species. As anthropologists demonstrate, the modern human comes from a relatively small (possibly just a few thousand) population which lived around 70,000 years ago in eastern Africa (Falk, Balling, 2010). The dominant landscape in that part of the world is the savannah. For our ancestors,

who functioned in hunter-gatherer groups, the savannah was the most advantageous location for purposes of survival. It offered rich nourishment, places of refuge and places to rest in the shade. Because the human mind changes at a far slower pace than the environment that surrounds us, we continue to prefer landscapes which contain the most important elements of the ecological niche inhabited by the predecessors of modern humans. Attractive images are those presenting scenes of water, rich flora and fauna, and topography facilitating observation along with the potential to take shelter during moments of danger (Orians, 1980; Orians, Heerwagen, 1992; Pinker, 1998; Dutton, 2003; Suhardi et al., 2006; Heinrich, 2013). Research results indicate that exposure to such stimuli leads to positive affective stimulation, reduces stress as well as temporarily increasing resistance to it, and also enhances efficiency in the performance of cognitive tasks (Parsons, Daniel, 2002; Buss, 2008).

Diagnostic and Therapeutic Aspects of Artistic Narrations by Inmates

The dawn of the 21st century saw growing interest in the effects of artistic undertakings in prison systems. It is emphasized that the results of artistic activities in penitentiary facilities possess an educational, therapeutic and recreation dimension; they are important not only in respect of optimizing the functionality of individuals serving custodial sentences, but also of the penitentiary facility as an institution, and ultimately for the whole of society in the future (Heenan, 2006; Johnson, 2008; Parkes, Bilby, 2010).

As previously mentioned, during “The Labyrinth of Freedom” prisoners were given the opportunity to creatively address the concept of freedom. The opportunity for inmates to express themselves through art has significant potential upside in respect of rehabilitation efforts. According to Gussak (2009, 2009a), the benefits of participation in artistic activities include enrichment of the prison environment, the possibility for emotional abreaction, and expression of one’s individualism in a socially acceptable manner. According to Johnson (2008, p. 100), “Art programs may be widely useful because artistic activities respond to prisoners’ basic human need for creative self-development, autonomy, and expression.”

To the list of benefits of artistic activity in the penitentiary context we may add their diagnostic potential. Obviously, before commencing therapy, we should perform a thorough diagnosis of the person or people who are to participate. A key issue is to ensure that the diagnosis is not limited merely to “assigning a label” in the form of a clinical diagnosis or an *a priori* belief as to the nature of an inmate’s problems. To diagnose, particularly in the context of Polish penitentiary facilities, means attempting to understand the world seen through the eyes of inmates – their life philosophy, beliefs, fears, hopes and plans for the future. Artistic or literary expression aids in finding a place for meeting where the natural distrust and even

hostility that accompanies contacts between prisoners and representatives of the penitentiary institution can take a back seat. Both sides can see themselves in a different light, not only through the prism of the social roles they presently play and their attendant limitations. For those employed by a penitentiary institution, such a dialogue can serve as a fertile source of ideas about the perception of the world, attitudes, stereotypes, sympathies and antipathies, emotional condition and many other aspects of inmates' psychological functioning, in turn assisting in properly directing future therapeutic efforts.

Creating Best Practices and Indications for Future Research

The artistic projects described in the preceding pages and conducted in prison facilities were not scientific in the neo-positivist sense of the term. In addition, the conclusions as presented constitute qualify as merely hypotheses. However, it would seem that there is massive potential associated firstly with the interdisciplinary approach and its inclusion of many actors to using art in penitentiary institutions, and secondly with undertaking systematic research in this area.

It is recommended by the institutions of the European Union to incorporate a broad spectrum of artistic activities into the process of prison rehabilitation. A total of 113 programs connected to education and training were funded by the EU between 2000 and 2011 and almost all EU countries participated at least in one of them (Hawley et al., 2013). Prison art projects are conducted within the Leonardo da Vinci, Socrates, Life-Long Learning programs and Grundtvig sub-programme. The *Grundtvig and Leonardo da Vinci Catalogue of Projects on Prison Education & Training*, published after the international conference "Pathways to Inclusion. Strengthening European Cooperation in Prison Education and Training" (GHK Consulting, 2010), lists 21 international Grundtvig projects of "Arts and cultural creativity." One of the broadest project is the *PAN European Network*, which involves sharing experience among the representatives of about 100 institutions from over 20 European countries.⁴

One example of the application of art in the penitentiary context was a project carried out in the years 2007–2013, under the aegis of the European Union and involving the cooperation of institutions in several countries. The project "was devoted to the development and growth of knowledge and exchange among the professionals involved in this field, to the strengthening of intercultural aspects and in general to the enhancement of the artistic and cultural productions in prisons (Art and Culture..., p. 12)." The artistic activities possessed a uniqueness specific to every country they took place in: in Italy, the theatre

⁴ The Internet is home to portals where one can find information concerning the evaluation of programmes that take advantage of artistic affects in prisons. One of the most well-known is artsevidence.org.uk, containing information about 88 such projects (accessed: 7.10.2014).

was referenced along with its significance in rehabilitation; in Northern Ireland, music and dance were applied; Germany saw literary workshops; in the United Kingdom there was support given to a range of forms of spontaneous creativity by inmates; in Catalonia the focus was on shaping social skills by such means as contact with art.

The programme Artlink Central was carried out from April 2008 to April 2009 in Scotland. It encompassed 110 women incarcerated in HM Prison Cornton Vale. They were offered the chance to participate in thematic workshops: music, ceramics, drama, crafts, make-up, printmaking, radio play. The evaluation performed by Nugent and Loucks (2009, pp. 12–13) indicated the following positive changes:

“Artlink Central helped participants see that they have talent.

The women felt proud that they had persevered and completed the courses.

Women felt more confident by the end of taking part in the courses.

Participants viewed the courses as both a great opportunity and great fun.

Participants enjoyed being able to make things for their children and for themselves to decorate their rooms.

The activities helped them ‘de-stress’ and were therapeutic.

Participants enjoyed having the prison officer take part.

Women worked through tea breaks in some instances to get work complete.

Participants wanted families to be invited in to see the work or performance.”

A review of 48 American programmes using art in prison conditions was undertaken by Gardner, Hager and Hillman (2014). Of those, 29 projects were addressed to adult inmates while participants in 19 of them were juveniles. Among the described programmes there were some which simultaneously applied various forms of artistic impacts (visual arts, writing, music, dance, drama, craft, theatre and other) as well as those involving exclusively one form, such as bibliotherapy, writing or visual arts. Interestingly, in nearly every case there were reports of positive changes among project participants. This may serve as both evidence of the potential of projects taking advantage of art in prisons and as indication of imperfections in evaluation of such programmes.

One of the problems affecting the use of art projects in prisons is the fact that they are difficult to be evaluated properly. Firstly, this results from the absence of theoretical models to serve as a foundation for measuring the effectiveness of rehabilitation. As indicated by Cullen (2002, p. 283), “Although criminology is rich in contemporary theories of crime, true theories of correctional intervention are in short supply.” Programmes are also frequently multi-aspectual, thus allowing inmates to engage in various forms of artistic activity, like music, dance, theatre and painting. An additional problem is the capacity to measure only short-term effects, as the individuals being submitted to evaluative studies are inmates in a penitentiary facility. It is essentially impossible to precisely establish the direct impact of participation in artistic activities on the fates of those who have served their sentences.

However, it would seem that much depends on the manner in which the effects of rehabilitation are defined. One of the most promising approaches is the concept of desistance, which highlights the processual nature of positive changes, and distinguishes primary and secondary desistance. Primary desistance means “a lull or crime-free gap in a criminal career” (McNeill et al., 2011, p. 82). According to Maruna and Farall (2004, p. 28), secondary desistance is possible when “(f)irst, the person finds a source of agency and communion in non-criminal activities. They find some sort of ‘calling’ – be it parenthood, painting, coaching, chess or what Sennett (2003) calls ‘craft-love’ – through which they find meaning and purpose outside of crime... The second part of our desistance formula, like that of Lemert’s deviance theory, involves societal reaction. The desisting person’s change in behaviour is sometimes recognized by others and reflected back to him in a ‘delabeling process’” (Trice, Roman, 1970).

Summary: Art Scientifically Oriented?

Nowadays, it is obvious that art has its place in prison rehabilitation programs. As indicated above, there is a wide range of projects that use arts to support the rehabilitation process all over the world. What is lacking is the theoretical-scientific basis to support these actions and the reliable verification of their effectiveness.

It seems that research on aesthetic preferences may provide guidance how to shape the prison environment to achieve the objectives of rehabilitation. Art projects in prisons are driven both by scientists, rehabilitation specialists and artists. Most often they are designed to trigger creative potential of prisoners and evoke positive changes in their behaviour. We propose to consider the possibility of (1) joint actions of artists, rehabilitation officers and scientists, and (2) science-based management of environment in prison to prevent prisoners’ aesthetic deprivation.

Ten years after the 2002 publication of the article cited above, Francis T. Cullen drew attention to the necessity of making reference to a coherent rehabilitation paradigm in work with prisoners. According to Cullen (2012, p. 106) it should “(1) be based on a coherent behavioural and criminological theory rooted in social science data, (2) identify both what the intervention should target for change and, based on the evidence, how to do so effectively, and (3) develop the technology for accomplishing this task successfully.” In referring primarily to the concept of risk – need – responsivity (RNR; see: Bonta, Wormith, 2007; Bonta, Andrews, 2007a), developed mainly in Canada and belonging to the cognitive-social learning theory strand of thought, the author indicates the six elements that should be taken into consideration when developing an effective rehabilitation program. The recommendations are as follows:

- the treatment intervention should be based on a sound theory of human behaviour;

- the treatment intervention should be based on a sound theory of criminal behaviour;
- select treatment modalities that are capable of changing the dynamic risk factors – that can address criminogenic needs;
- find out which offenders should receive the treatment;
- specify other conditions that should be followed to achieve enhanced reductions in recidivism;
- develop the empirically validated technology required to deliver treatment (Cullen, 2012, pp. 106–108).

Neuroscientific research on art is revealing the close ties between aesthetic experience and affect. Positive emotions are evoked by works considered to be beautiful, and the experience of positive affect is correlated with reduced tendencies towards destructive and self-destructive behaviours, which constitute a serious problem in penitentiary facilities.

A particular type of aesthetic experience is associated with the display of works that evoke empathy among the viewers – they activate centres in the brain responsible for important moral emotions. It is an undisputed fact that a large proportion of inmates responsible for violent crimes experience deficits in this area. One may arrive at the conclusion that long-term exposure to so-called empathy stimuli may serve to stimulate these centres, in turn creating the “neural” potential of a personality.

Regardless of the undoubted value of the artistic programmes already in place in penitentiary institutions, it is worth keeping in mind other potential uses of art for rehabilitation. We feel that while the clear value of freedom in artistic creation should be kept in mind, it must also be remembered that certain artefacts can have an equally negative impact on the cognitive and affective functioning of prisoners. For this reason it would seem worth considering a solution involving the creation of aesthetic stimuli to be used in penitentiary facilities by artists cooperating with cognitive psychologists, criminologists and neuroscientists who possess expert knowledge concerning aesthetic experience and its potential impact on the brain and mind of the individual.

Studies addressing this issue have achieved notoriety in recent years. A good example is “The Science of Art,” a paper by Ramachandran and Hirstein, in which they perform a comprehensive analysis of aesthetic effects exerted by stimuli of a certain character on the functioning of specified regions of the brain. Considering the fact that some of these regions are engaged in affective and moral experiences, it could be claimed that artefacts prepared by artists in cooperation with scientists will be beneficial in penal practice.

The title of this chapter is not accidental. We believe that there is a need for scientific research of the aesthetic preferences of prisoners and the impact of aesthetic stimulation on their mental and social functioning. An introduction of systematic, evidence-based, changes in the prison environment, can help to reduce stress and the negative effects of inmates’ sensory deprivation. Positive emotions,

which – as is to be expected – will be evoked by a more stimulating environment (created by artists in cooperation with scientists) should in turn lead to a reduction in the size of aggressive and self-aggressive behavior. We also believe that using “emphatic” art can help to develop the regions of inmates’ brains responsible for social emotions. These effects of the scientifically designed art in prison can strengthen prisoners’ resistance to environmental risk experiences.

Therefore we are convinced that scientific investigation of the issue of art in prison is directly related with the concepts of resilience in the social sciences. Incarcerated persons experience high level of stress associated with imprisonment and social stigma. Building resources that help them to regain mental balance and social adaptation is particularly important. We assume, referring *inter alia* to the works of Charles Kupfer (2002) and Michael Rutter (2006), that aesthetic experience can be a “turning point” in the prisoners’ perception of themselves and the world.⁵ Prisoners’ contact with art may also be important as a factor “interrupting the chain of negative events” in their life (Borucka, Ostaszewski, 2008).

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⁵ See: “delayed recovery may derive from <turning point> effects in adult life” (Rutter, 2006, p. 11).

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